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The Congregational-Unitarian Controversy, 1785-1830
. . . Radiocarbon Dating — II . . . Some Notes Towards
a Bibliography of Jean Calvin . . . The Philosophy of
Herman Dooyeweerd.



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RADIOCARBON DATING — I

THOMAS H. LEITH

Several years before Pearl Harbor a number of researchers in cosmic rays opened the door to what is now the most useful method of dating the recent past. In the less than two decades that the door has stood ajar this dating technique has become popularly known and just as popularly misunderstood. It is hoped that this article will clear up some of the misunderstanding surrounding this tool and elicit some regard for the great usefulness which it has in anthropology, archeology, and geology. To this end, let us look first at the far-from-obvious relationship between cosmic rays and the dates given certain events in the last few thousand years.

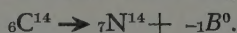
It is well known that cosmic rays continually bombard the earth from outer space. When they reach the surface of the earth, the rays consist partly of very short waves and partly of high-speed charged particles such as electrons, positrons, and protons. It is not perfectly clear which of these are formed in our atmosphere and which are primary, but one thing is clear, they carry a lot of energy—in fact much more than any other type of radiation. Thus the scientists suspected that they might detect effects in the atmosphere due to them, particularly to their collision with atoms of the air.

It will be recalled that an atom may be roughly conceived as a nucleus composed of neutrons and protons with surrounding orbital electrons. Neutrons have about the same mass as protons and both are nearly two thousand times as heavy as the electron. The electrical charge in atoms, however, is carried by the electrons and protons in equal but opposite amounts. Normal atoms, being electrically neutral, then, have the same number of protons as electrons; the number of each varying from one to over a hundred to give us the hundred or so different types of atoms now known to science. Physicists commonly speak of the *atomic number* of an atom as the number of protons it contains and the *atomic mass* as the sum of the number of protons and neutrons (the electrons being negligible). Thus an atom they call Carbon having 5 protons, 6 electrons, and 6 neutrons has an atomic number of 6 and an atomic mass of 12. This is usually written ${}^6\text{C}^{12}$.

However, like many types of atoms, Carbon has *isotopes*. These are similar to one another for most chemical purposes, having the same number of electrons and protons but differing in the number of neutrons, hence having different atomic masses. The type having 8 neutrons is called Carbon-14 and is written ${}^6\text{C}^{14}$.

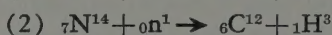
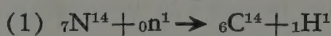
Now it is known that this atom is unstable, that is, its nucleus may disintegrate. Such an atom we call *radioactive*. Carbon-14 disintegrates by the loss of a beta-ray which is like a free electron. The loss of mass is negli-

ble, but the positively charged nucleus loses one negative charge, hence increases in positive charge by one. The atom now has 6 electrons in the orbits around the nucleus but a charge of $7+$ in the nucleus. To restore the atom's neutrality it picks up an electron from its surroundings and places it in the orbits as this is vastly easier than putting it in the nucleus to replace the lost beta-ray. The atom now has atomic mass 14 but atomic number 7. The atom with this atomic number is known as Nitrogen. Hence we have changed, by radioactive decay, a Carbon-14 atom into Nitrogen as follows:



We may now see the part played by cosmic rays in this process. In 1939, it was shown that cosmic rays of billion-volt energy hitting air atoms produced million-volt neutrons by the collisions. Studies of the atmosphere reveal that the amount of neutrons free in the air rises to a maximum as we go up to about 50,000 feet and then falls off, indicating that these are likely produced at about this level and do not come in from outside; nor do most last long in approaching the earth. Their known short average life-time confirms that it isn't likely they could travel any distance in outer space. In the laboratory it has shown that Nitrogen is by far the most active type of atom in air in collision with these neutrons, and this is particularly true of the common isotope ${}_7\text{N}^{14}$.

There are at least two theoretically possible reactions as below:



The symbol ${}_0\text{n}^1$ indicates a neutron having atomic number zero and atomic mass of one. A proton is denoted by ${}_1\text{H}^1$, where H is the symbol for Hydrogen and is used here because a proton is simply the nucleus of the isotope of Hydrogen having atomic mass of one and of course atomic number of one. The symbol ${}_1\text{H}^3$ denotes the nucleus of Hydrogen of atomic mass 3. This becomes the Hydrogen isotope, tritium (which has two neutrons and one proton), when it gains an orbital electron.

It is known that in the neutron energy-range available in the upper atmosphere, reaction (1) is so much more probable that it uses up nearly all the neutrons generated by the cosmic rays. Less than 1% of the neutrons appears likely to go into forming tritium. Current studies indicate that the average number of neutrons produced per square centimeter of the earth's surface is in the range of 1.9-2.6. Libby of Chicago, the *Altmeister* in this field, uses currently a figure of 2.4 as preferable. The average is used because of latitudinal variation of cosmic ray intensity and hence of neutron formation. Now, if essentially all of these go to form Carbon-14, there will be about 2.4 atoms of Carbon-14 formed/sq. cm./sec.

ond. It is known that these start to decay immediately, one-half of the total being changed in about 5600 years. This period is thus known as the *half-life* and implies that in 11,200 years only one-quarter will remain unchanged and so on for longer periods of time. However, if the process has been going on for some time (say at least 13,000 years) we will have a steady state set up with as many C^{14} atoms being formed per second as decay per second into Nitrogen. We should thus be able to calculate how much C^{14} presently exists on earth. If the earth's area is 5×10^{18} square cms., we should have about 12×10^{18} atoms of C^{14} formed (or decaying) per second over the whole earth. If now we have measured in the laboratory the rate of disintegration of C^{14} (170 billion disintegration/sec./gm.) we may divide this figure into the 2.4, and changing units, obtain the total amount of Carbon-14 on the earth's surface as just over 70 tons. The *figure* is not of great importance, but its *location* is the basis of the method of age determination suggested by Willard Libby about 1945.

We have seen that this Carbon-14 is formed from neutron bombardment of Nitrogen in the air. Since the maximum for neutron concentration is at about 50,000 feet, most neutrons formed above escape from the earth while those below produce C^{14} almost entirely. The average altitude of production is about six miles, and it is here our radioactive Carbon is being formed. Within a matter of hours it appears likely that each atom burns in the air to form a radioactive carbon dioxide molecule, though the process is not thoroughly understood. Winds then mix this radioactive CO_2 with the usual inert variety made of normal C^{12} atoms. This makes all the CO_2 in the air partly radioactive, but while radioactive carbon disintegrates at a rate about that of radium it is so diluted by surrounding inert Carbon that the quantity of CO_2 we breathe daily is quite harmless.

Now plants live on this CO_2 reservoir in our atmosphere, and since some of this is radioactive (plants become slightly radioactive. Animals eating the plants become radioactive likewise. In the oceans dissolved CO_2 and various carbonates and acid carbonates which exchange carbon with the CO_2 also become radioactive. It is estimated that less than 1000 years is needed for the CO_2 at any time to distribute itself through these reservoirs and return to the air. Certainly most plants and animals die and return a large portion of their carbon to the air in much less time than this. This means five complete turnovers, at least, of all living carbon on earth through the air in the half-life of a C^{14} atom, and some eight times in the *average* life of 8000 years. It appears that this should allow latitudinal mixing in the biosphere and counteract any initial vari-

ations due to increase of cosmic ray incidence with higher latitudes which would produce four times more C^{14} near the magnetic poles than near the equator. Confirmation has been obtained from laboratory measurements of the radioactivity of wood, leaves, sewage, sea shells, seal oil, etc. from greatly different latitudes and longitudes. Hence we may safely say that living matter has a constant amount of Carbon-14 per gram of carbon contained all over the globe.

However, we may ask if the experimental value, which is about 15.3 disintegrations/minute/gram of Carbon, agrees with what we might expect. We know the concentration of Carbon per square centimeter of the earth's surface rather well. It is about 7 grams/sq. cm. from oceanic carbonates, .6 grams/sq. cm. from dissolved organic matter in the oceans, .3 grams/sq. cm. from plants and animals (the biosphere), and .1 grams/sq. cm. from the atmosphere. This totals about 8 grams per square centimeter and gives a predicted decay rate for carbonaceous matter of $2.4 \times 60/8 = 18$ disintegrations/minute/gram of Carbon. As we see this is within 15% of that actually measured, which is very good considering the inaccuracy of the estimates of the weight of organic matter of various forms over the earth. This means that the C^{14} production today is the same as 8000 years ago (unless errors have cancelled) and also that the oceans circulate completely in at least that time. The latter has been experimentally demonstrated by Laurence Kulp at Columbia and, as it alone could provide most of a cancelling error to a mistake in estimates of Carbon-14 production (or cosmic ray intensity), we may assume constant cosmic ray activity. Besides it is unlikely that the volumes of the oceans should vary just like cosmic rays. Higher activity until recently would give an experimental figure much above that predicted and lower activity a value much below that predicted. The assumption basic to all dating by this method is now made: there has been little change in the Carbon reservoir or the cosmic ray intensity over the period dated—currently over 40,000 years—so that we have a reservoir of C^{14} in a steady state, with as much C^{14} being added to it as is lost by decay.

The above somewhat complex considerations mean that any living thing or any carbon at the surface of the sea is in equilibrium with the rate of C^{14} formation by cosmic rays. Thus for every C^{14} atom in it that decays one is replaced from food or the air and one is formed from cosmic rays to replace it. Removal from the cycle by death or circulation below the ocean surface immediately stops this process and the Carbon-14 decays without replacement. The longer a thing has been removed from the cycle, the more C^{14} will have decayed and the less of the amount it had while alive will remain. Half of it will be gone in about 5600 years, three-quar-

ters in 11,200 years, etc. If the rate of decay was approximately 15.3 disintegrations/minute/gram of Carbon while alive, at the end of a half-life only about 7.6 B's will come off per minute per gram of Carbon. At the end of two half-lives we will have only 3.8 and after three half-lives only 1.9 and so on. Thus by measuring the decay rate of a specimen in the laboratory we should be able to determine the time elapsed since removal from equilibrium with the CO₂ in the air.

Specimens of age known with reasonable precision by other means were checked, if they contained Carbon, with this assumption and found to agree, with few exceptions, within experimental error. Of course independently good dates go back less than one half-life of Carbon-14. This means less than half the C¹⁴ in the oldest specimen has yet to decay. Since equipment now available can measure very little C¹⁴ decay, it is possible to use the method to determine absolute ages for old specimens for which we have no dates obtainable otherwise. Some of those of interest will be mentioned in the following issue, together with a discussion of their import to the Christian.

It might now be well to pause and consider reasons for the confidence we can place in the method. We have, in the past few years, obtained some surprising dates as far as previously estimated absolute figures go but remarkably few that require change in independently organized relative dates. For example, the time of the end of the last glacial period has been decreased from about 25,000 years to about 11,000 years in North America and Europe, but Libby states (*American Scientist*, Jan. 1956) that "we know of no serious proportion of the dates which are not internally consistent". Our assurance of the method's validity for the last 13,000 years lies in rather good experimental checks with historical dates for the last 5000 years (and hence for 8000 years prior to them), and in comparing experimental rates of decay in contemporary specimens with predicted rates. But does our reasoning apply for the much older rates given by the smaller C¹⁴ concentrations our instruments can now measure rather well? It seems likely that cosmic ray intensity and energy should have been essentially constant over the last 50,000 years or so, though this is largely for lack of evidence for any astronomical cause of change. Also, large variations would put dates out of correspondence with stratigraphic order and this is not found. Too, we find that another method of dating deep sea sediments using Ionium gives dates in good agreement with those of Carbon-14. Hence it appears safe to assume constancy of cosmic radiation over the period above. If nitrogen supply, as seems likely, has not altered, then Carbon-14 should have been formed at a rate close to that found at present. The difficulty immediately obvious is a change in the Carbon res-

ervoir on the earth. The major controls here are the amounts of animal and plant life and, to a much greater extent, the size of the oceans. However, there is little reason to feel any change in the amount of living matter would be of any real significance and the change in the volume of water, even during an Ice Age, is only about 5%. The ocean is also at present very close, on the average, to freezing so that the Ice Age temperature should not have affected the solubility of CO_2 and the carbonates more than a small amount.

There are other problems. One is the likelihood of a change in the half-life of C^{14} . Each year we increase the precision of its value and hence of dates calculated from it, but has it perhaps varied in the past and does it vary from specimen to specimen? We may answer both of these queries in part by saying that as far as physicists know the rate is immutable to heat, cold, pressure, or chemical reaction since it is a nuclear phenomenon of much higher energy than those reactions involving orbital electrons. Hence all Carbon materials now in equilibrium with the CO_2 in the air should have the same decay rate, and this we observe. This has also been demonstrated in rigorous theory by Segré (*Physical Review*, Vol. 71, p. 274, 1947) and Daudel (*Bol. Radiactividad*, Vol. 22, p.109, 1949). Even if the rate did change, the relative positions of materials dated would not be altered.

Another problem is the possibility of change in the $\text{C}^{14}:\text{C}^{12}$ ratio after removal from the cycle. Addition of C^{14} after burial or circulation into deep water is unlikely as most cosmic neutrons are stopped by a few feet of water or earth. A comparison of sewage methane with petroleum methane bore this out by showing no difference. Also it is chemically unlikely that Carbon atoms can be replaced in giant molecules of organic substances so that it is unlikely that any C^{14} is lost by this type of chemical change after entombment. One must be careful, nonetheless, to measure only the original Carbon and not associated or absorbed dirt, or in the case of shells, replaced carbonate. We will discuss this later. It should be noted, however, that errors from such sources would generally *lower* the age determined for the specimen.

From the above, we see that beyond some 12-13,000 years ago the method may involve errors inherent in the mechanisms involved, but we have no reason, as yet, to feel these are large. The basic limitation as to usefulness in the more distant past is one of decreased content of C^{14} remaining (particularly if the specimen had very little total carbon originally), and hence of the number of countable disintegrations. This is essentially a question of instrumentation and technique of measurement and to this we will now turn.

(to be continued)

THE CHRISTIAN AND GENERAL LITERATURE

MIRIAM E. FACKLER

Some sober thinkers, both within the fold of evangelical Christianity and outside it, question whether the pietistic or Puritan type of Christian, the genuine Fundamentalist, has any business at all with secular or general literature, particularly that distinctly worldly in situation, treatment or implication. It is to answer such thinkers, I believe, that the question I am to consider has been proposed. Does the study of general (that is, non-Biblical) literature assist in the understanding of the Bible? This, I judge, is simply a rhetorical question, expecting the answer, "Yes." My responsibility is to open up for examination some of the specific considerations implicated in this one-word answer.

Let me modify the wording of the question somewhat and turn it into a statement: For souls "fittingly constituted," (Poe's phrase) the study of general literature *may* assist in the understanding of the Bible. By souls fittingly constituted I mean those who are familiar with both Scripture and literature and who, at the same time, are sufficiently *reflective* to be able to draw parallels, perceive contrasts. 'Understanding' I interpret to include appreciation by heart and soul.

The thoughtful Christian, who tests all literature by the touchstone of the Scriptures, will observe, for example, that the action of "The Cask of Amontillado" takes place quite outside a Biblical frame of reference, within a very devil's World Order. He will appraise the tale accordingly. Again, he will perceive that although Thomas Hardy, in his poetry, builds up a case for the indifference or purposelessness of the universe, especially in regard to man, he does so by ignoring the Fall, the actuality and power of Satan, and God's long-range plan for the redemption of the whole world order—man, society, physical nature. Hardy's avoidance of the figure of the Saviour is noticeable. The Christian reader will see that Hardy is monoptic, blind to a whole important body of truth, and he will, therefore, never be so deeply and favorably impressed by Hardy's verse as unbelievers have been.

Granted the soul fittingly constituted, the Christian student, say, what are some of the ways by which he may find his study of secular literature of assistance in understanding the Bible?

First, his acquaintance with literary concepts, training in observation of literary forms, tempers or modes, styles, stylistic devices, may serve to open his eyes to many worthy features of the Bible which he might not otherwise note. Until he has read *The Iliad*, *Agamemnon*, *Oedipus Rex*,

Samson Agonistes, and knows something of classical epic and drama—their forms, conventions, restraint, nobility of tone, austerity of style—he can only halfway appreciate the book of Job. When he has grasped the concept of 'pure lyric', he has a key to appreciation of the deeply personal nature and singing qualities of Psalm 116 and the "Magnificat." Having once experienced sublimity as literary atmosphere and style, in the *Divine Comedy*, for instance, he is better able to enter into the sublimity of the book of Revelation. The keen irony Elijah, the prophet of God, hurls at the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel is equalled by nothing I know in secular literature; but Shakespeare's Mark Antony may well prepare the student for its effects. Having discovered the charming directness, simplicity, tenderness of Anderson's "The Ugly Duckling," the student is prepared to savor the same qualities in the parable of the prodigal son, or the parable of the Father's heart, as Campbell Morgan preferred to call it, and to perceive the richness of the story beneath the story. By way of the *Apologia* of Socrates the Christian reader may learn to value the dignity and nobility of Paul's address on Mars' Hill. If the student has encountered parallelism in *Hiawatha* and "Ulalume," he is ready for it in the Psalms or Isaiah and understand its poetic value. If he has learned what usefulness and delight reside in apt metaphors, as in the opening paragraph of Lamb's "Poor Relations," he welcomes a Biblical passage like Jude 12 and 13: "These are spots in your feasts . . . clouds without water, carried about of winds; . . . trees whose fruit withereth . . . raging waves of the sea . . . wandering stars." (What magnificent cosmic consciousness!) All one can learn of symbolism in stories like Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil" and "Lady Eleanor's Mantle" or in poems like Poe's "The Haunted Palace" should stand him in good stead when he reads Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Revelation.

Again, general literature has very direct and positive ways of illuminating the Bible and enriching one's appreciation of it. Authors, drawing material from human life and shaping it artistically, create, sometimes intentionally, more often unintentionally, extensive illustrations of Bible truths. Whole novels, plays, short stories, poems elaborate particular Bible teachings. *The House of Seven Gables* and Ibsen's *Ghosts* are built about a "sins of the fathers" motif. *Antigone* and Shaw's *St. Joan* each has its own characteristic way of declaring that we must obey God rather than men. *Moby Dick* and *Othello* show that there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. *The Everlasting Mercy* offers a modern illustration of II Corinthians 5:17—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature . . ."

Still other great pieces of literature, in their general impact, tend to

parallel and reinforce Bible teaching and influence. Browning's "Saul"—always, to me, at least, deeply moving—is a dramatic defense of the personality of God and declaration of his profound concern for individual men. The second of the three poems George Herbert calls "Love" illuminates the principle of divine grace. The soul, feeling its unfitness to partake of the feast of the Lord, offers to stand and serve; but the Lord graciously constrains him to sit and eat. What responsive spirit can read this poem without loving his Lord a little more for it? John Donne's abrupt, positive, defiant "Death thou shalt die" rings in the Christian's ear long after he has read the *Holy Sonnets*.

But these authors were all Christians. From free-thinking sources, also, Bible truth is reinforced to the discerning mind, or elaborated or paralleled. I know of no better example of this than Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. In the third act of this splendid lyrical drama Shelley gives us his vision of a universe and human society long shackled by hateful law, now freed at last to live by the principle of love:

None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
Gazed on another's eye of cold command.

Shelley knew that this is not the best of all possible worlds, that tyranny and oppression are not the accepted order of the universe, and he trusted that love will one day prevail. In these convictions and in his ardent desire for a new heaven and a new earth, the Christian can follow him. On the other hand, the Christian finds one great and fatal omission in Shelley's restored universe—the Lord of Life and Love is not there. Whitman, following nineteenth century science, perceives the kinship of all created things—men, animals, the wild duck, the running blackberry vine, the mica on the side of the rock—and their equal importance in the economy of the universe. The realization of this kinship awakens in him an all-embracing acceptance of all, love of all. The Christian, weighing this carefully, remembers that the fate of the earth and all her creatures is inextricably bound up with that of man, and that with the Fall the whole physical creation suffered and even now awaits the promised redemption. And so the thoughtful Christian, reading Whitman, begins to feel greater respect and compassion for the earth and all her creatures.

In the third place, general literature may serve to illuminate the Scriptures indirectly. It may focus attention, in a revealing way, on particular aspects of the physical creation which in the Bible are merely suggested or touched upon. Thus it may serve to vivify the Scriptural suggestions. "Lift up your eyes on high," says Isaiah, "and behold who hath created

these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth." Here the stars are symbols and agents of the principle of order in the universe. What a commentary on this concept is Meredith's "Lucifer in Starlight"! Lucifer, the principle of anarchy and disorder, thinking, perhaps, to storm once more the battlements of God, mounts up to Heaven.

He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

The reader catches the feeling of invincible might, complete and perfect control, a cosmic order not to be broken into or deflected.

Non-Biblical literature, by its imaginative extension of the bounds of Time and Space, helps one to apprehend the Biblical concept of eternity. Spenser's "Mutability" cantos, in Book VII of *The Faerie Queene*, push out one's horizons beyond his own little narrow three score years and ten, beyond the confines of human history, even, and introduce one to the cosmic scope of things. Whitman, too, in his own awkward way, in *Song of Myself*, Section 44, manages to convey the idea and feeling of great duration of time:

I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an encloser of things to be.

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs,
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between the steps,
All below duly travel'd, and still I mount and mount.

Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me,
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I know I was even there,
I waited unseen and always, and slept through the lethargic mist,
And took my time and took no hurt from the fetid carbon.

Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

In like manner secular literature may indirectly illumine Scripture by focusing attention in a revealing manner on particular aspects of man. The concept of the worth of the individual, quite apart from rank, wealth, or position, so clearly taught in both Old and New Testaments, finds noble reinforcement in George Eliot's *Adam Bede* and Wordsworth's poetic tale of the old Lakeland shepherd, "Michael." The Bible tells us that at one point in our Lord's earthly ministry Jesus did not commit himself to men because he knew what is in man. No human being can begin to fathom the depths of blackness in the human heart; but general literature especially in the last thirty years, has gone a long way toward showing us what is there.

And this brings me to my last point. General or 'worldly' literature may lead the child of God into greater and greater appreciation of the Bible through negative influence. Some writings cause one to turn back to the refreshing stream of the Bible through very nausea. The meanness and pettiness of Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, the hatefulness of Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* and Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*, the horror of a selfish soul turned inward upon itself in Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, the utter shamelessness of Moll Flanders and Studs Lonigan, the desperate, God-defying darkness of *The Dynasts* are all cases in point.

Obviously the soul fittingly constituted must be selective and discriminating.

LANGUAGE AND THEOLOGY* — III

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

RICHARD K. CURTIS

(Continued from December, 1956 issue)

While each of these facets of general revelation has, to some extent, been used to understand special revelation, is it possible that there is much yet that they can contribute?

7. Terry, Milton S., *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d., lists several methods of interpretation which reveal the impact of general upon special revelation: Halachic and Hagadic methods of the ancient Hebrews; allegorical method of Philo; mystical interpretation of Clement and Origen; Swedenborg's science of correspondencies; accommodation theory of Semler; moral interpretation of Kant; naturalistic theory of Paulus; Hegel's dialectical method of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis; the mythical theories of Strauss and Baur; speculative philosophy; dogmatic exposition and apology; and grammatico-historical method. Kuist, Howard T., *These Words Upon My Heart*, Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1947, after noting these, concludes: "Much may be learned by comparing and appraising the various methods of studying Holy Scripture through the ages." John Dewey, writing on "Method" in *A Cyclopaedia of Education*, edited by Paul Monroe, New York: Macmillan, 1911, adds: "Strictly speaking, method is thoroughly individual. Each person has his own instinctive way of going at a thing; the attitude and the mode of approach and attack are individual." Thus we see how one's method of approach to Scripture is an outgrowth of his *Weltanschauung*.

The compass of this brief paper would prohibit (even if one could have at

It is recognized that this is a highly controversial article. It is hoped that its publication will evoke response, since clarification in the area of this discussion is vital for an evangelical interpretation of linguistics. Previous discussion has been centered around Scripture and logic. The *Review* invites the submission of articles primarily from the point of view of linguistics or the philosophy of language.—Ed.

his disposal) further bearing of history or fiction upon special revelation.⁸

8. Kuist, *op. cit.*, brings to bear further findings in fiction (the arts) upon the understanding of special revelation in a most illuminating manner.

Furthermore, it would be a prodigious, if not impossible task to bring to bear the innumerable findings of the many sciences.⁹

9. Ramm, Bernard, *The Christian Interpretation of Science and Scripture*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1955 is one of the few attempts at this task.

But perhaps some of the major findings in the general area of communication may throw some light on the problem.

If science has so advanced in a mere two hundred years as to present us with the awesome potential of nuclear fission, is the blame for its misuse to be placed so much at the door of the scientist as at the door of those who, through the centuries, have assumed the trusteeship of our morals?¹⁰

10. Cf. Hutchinson, John A., *Faith, Reason, and Existence*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1956, p. 261; Ramm, *op. cit.*, Ch. I.; Carnell, Edward J., *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1950, Ch. 13.

If science, like other disciplines, has at times overstepped itself and claimed for itself more than it should have (that is, has been unable to account for sizeable areas of meaningful experience), it is yet possible that it has much to offer in its own right to our interpretation of special revelation?¹¹

11. Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, p. 260: "Conflict has occurred at times when religion has attempted to make specific factual statements and to certify them by religious authority. From the opposite side, the scientist sometimes errs in assuming the mantle of the philosopher, theologian, or sage and attempting to throw the authority of science behind his conclusions. Rather we must insist that philosophical and religious statements are made and certified by methods and standards appropriate to these respective enterprises."

In the first place, does the attitude of the scientist in not only accepting but inviting the criticism of subsequent research constitute a vital contribution to the theologian?¹²

12. "Perhaps," "maybe," "could it be that," "there is a possibility that," characteristic of the presentation of a scientific paper, itself the result of many hundreds of hours of painstaking research, usually stands in marked contrast to the dogmatic "I believe with all my heart," "the truth of the matter is," "without question," "obviously," "it is certain that," characteristic of so many theological papers, in which there is usually but a fraction of the time spent in research.

Does the method of science, the painstaking observation, classification and comparison of "facts" toward the inductive formulation of "laws" constitute another vital contribution?¹³

13. For other definitions of the scientific methods, cf. Newman, James R., *What Is Science?* New York: Simon G. Schuster, 1955, and Briggs, *op. cit.*, p. 245. It would appear that the best method of arriving at the meaning of Scripture would be to combine the inductive, deductive, and logic of meaning approaches. Cf. Harris, Robert T., and Jarrett, James L., *Language and Informal Logic*, New York: Longmans Green, 1956, p. 12.

Finally, do the findings, especially in the fields of the social sciences, constitute a third vital contribution?¹⁴

14. Cf. Newman, *op. cit.*, chapters on Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Science as Foresight; Rapoport, Anatol, *Operational Philosophy*, New York: Harper Bros., 1954, Chapters 15-18.

If theologians remain aloof from science, history, or fiction in the interpretation of Scripture, do they not court disaster in thwarting the very purpose of God in giving us special revelation?¹⁵

15. Kuist, *op. cit.*, p. 116, points out that Scripture is an instrument of emancipation, a means of instruction rather than an idol to be worshipped. It emancipates by calling for a fourfold response from the interpreter, "wholeheartedly integrity; the heartthrob of freedom; filial fear: the safeguard of freedom; holy trust in God's goodness, faithfulness and care: the strength of freedom: and love for one's neighbor: the grace of freedom." Cf. Lewis, Edwin, *A Philosophy of the Christian Revelation*, New York: Harper and Bros., 1940, pp. 55, 62.

If theologians go to the other extreme, and effect a synthesis between special revelation and secular philosophies, do they not likewise defeat their purpose?¹⁶

16. Cf. Toynbee, Arnold J., *A Study of History*, abridgement by Somervell, New York: Oxford, 1946, Ch. 19; Morris, Charles, *Signs, Language and Behavior*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1946, p. 236.

Is the wisest course possibly that advocated by John A. Hutchinson, in which faith, defined as "trust and commitment of the will or heart," while combined with reason, is given primacy over it?¹⁷

17. Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, p. 99. Berkhof, L., *Aspects of Liberalism*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1951, agrees substantially with this viewpoint: "God's special revelation surpasses his revelation in nature and history in clearness. We can only read the book of nature aright when, according to the representation of Calvin, we use the Bible as a pair of spectacles." Probably Berkhof would agree that a look at the Bible through the spectacles of science, history, or fiction might also be helpful.

If then we keep constantly before us the supreme goal of both special and general revelation, that of producing in us Christlikeness, do we have the best possible safeguard against sterility from stagnation as well as sterility from dilution?

Now while a comprehensive study of communication necessarily involves numerous, if not innumerable other fields of study, we will limit this paper to semantics. (Perhaps at a later time I can enlarge on syntactics, with its logical arrangement of words).

Semantics

If we define semantics as the systematic study of meaning, then may we conceive of general semantics as "the study and improvement of human evaluative processes with special emphasis on the relation of signs and symbols, including language"?¹⁸

18. Chase, Stuart, *Power of Words*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1953, p. 128, quoting the International Society for General Semantics. On the other hand Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 217, defines semantics as "the study of the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable," as distinguished from pragmatics. Walpole, Hugh R., *Semantics*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1941, conceives of semantics as the nature of words and their meaning, somewhat more strict than Morris. Chase, *op. cit.*, outlines the goals of general semantics as helping the individual fashion a world view, promote more effective communication, and help mental illness.

If there are some significant areas for comparison between the phylogenesis and ontogenesis of language, may we draw upon the latter for pertinent questions, since our information about the former is most problematical?¹⁹

19. Here the general thesis of Ramm, *op. cit.*, regarding the Genesis account of creation seems pertinent. According to this view, Gen. 2:19, 20, while theologically sound, need not posit a scientifically accurate account for the origin of language. Sullivan, J. W. N., *The Limitations of Science*, New York: Viking, 1933, p. 88 quotes E. Sapir in the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*: "Many attempts have been made to unravel the origin of language, but most of these are hardly more than examples of speculative imagination. Linguists as a whole have lost interest in the problem for two reasons: first, there exist no truly primitive languages in a psychological sense . . . secondly, our knowledge of psychology, particularly of symbolic process in general, is not felt to be sound enough to help materially."

Does the evidence, including the fear of falling and the sucking reflexes of infants, seem to indicate that man, from birth, is confronted with a basic need for survival?²⁰

20. Perhaps it is wise to avoid the term "instinct" in light of the confusion in psychological circles as to its nature. Especially has the school of hormic psychology had to revise its findings concerning the various "instincts." Rapoport, *op. cit.*, pp. 95, 96 cites four invariant needs of all mankind: survival, gregariousness, order, and security.

To what extent is this need extended and intensified by a growing concept of time and its concomitant, security?²¹

21. Rapoport, *op. cit.*, p. 96, points out that "sometimes the present is altogether void of gratification. The need for 'security' is then simply the need for hope." What appears to take place in conversion is an infinite extension as well as a varying intensification of the need for survival. Thus a Christian becomes more keenly interested in survival in eternal bliss than in immediate survival. This will usually intensify one's "meaningfulness" in life, and thus intensify his desire to live in both worlds. However, the desire to fulfill both needs, for the immediate and the ultimate survival, often results in conflict. This conflict is strongest when a Christian, in the prime of life, finds this life most satisfying, and still is anxious to assure himself a heavenly home. The conflict tends to resolve itself in old age, or when unhappiness plagues this life, and immediate survival is gradually eclipsed by the desire for eternal life. On the other hand, this conflict is sometimes resolved, at least temporarily, by the need for eternal survival being eclipsed by the immediate, especially in times of abundant prosperity.

As a means of survival, must man now attempt to order the world about him that he might relate himself most meaningfully to those parts he selects as well as to the whole as he construes it?²²

22. Here it is well to recall the findings of Gestalt psychology in that the whole is always more than a mere sum of its parts.

How important a part does the gratification of immediate needs for survival play in this selection? (e.g. baby focussing on mother's breast, on bottle, etc.) Is man's social need, gregariousness, then subservient as an instrument in the fulfilling of his basic need for survival?²³

23. Many conflicts in life seem to stem from two basic sources: a. The competing needs of gregariousness and order (e.g. the introvert-extrovert tendencies which so often ask, "Should I stay at home with a good book or go out with the fellows?"). b. The competing needs on the continuum of time, or security. Disjunctively phrased, my immediate vs. my long range needs (e.g. the graduate student who suppresses the need for a new car in favor of the doctoral degree).

To what extent is man's selection of sensory data metaphorically based, in that it derives from a comparison of similarities between perceived objects (breast, milkbottle) and other objects (rattle, ball)? Is this process of metaphor subject to the whole range of sensory stimuli—visual, auditory, tactual, olfactory, and gustatory? To what extent does this become the basis of all creative thinking?²⁴

24. Rapoport, *op. cit.*, has an excellent chapter (17) on "Metaphors and Models," in which he stresses (p. 205): "Metaphors are not only symptoms of the way events are perceived but also factors in the shaping of perception. Metaphors are fixers of ideas. They enable particular perceptions to perpetuate themselves. This is especially true of the metaphors which describe the nature of man and society and thus implicitly incorporate value judgments." Cf. Fosdick, Harry Emerson, *What Is Vital in Religion*, New York: Harper Bros., 1955, p. 155; Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 136, gives a lengthy definition of metaphor.

Barring a social environment (wild boy of Aveyron), to what extent would man's ordering of the world differ from that of animals?²⁵

25. Cf. Sullivan, *op. cit.*, pp. 87, 89, 96-99.

Granting now a social environment, to what extent does language control man's ordering of the universe?²⁶

26. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 2: "Language is of such central importance that it becomes an object of central concern in times of extensive social readjustment." P. 3: "Insight into the nature of signs provides us with an instrument which improves our understanding of, and effective participation in, the whole of our contemporary intellectual, cultural, personal, and social problems." Rapoport, *op. cit.*, p. viii, ix, Preface: "The modern theory of knowledge in operational philosophy cannot be separated from a theory of communication and meaning." Chase, *op. cit.*, pp. 101, 102, quoting Benjamin Lee Whorf: "The forms of man's thoughts are controlled by patterns learned early, of which the man is mostly unconscious. Thinking is a language process, whether in English, Russian, or Hopi. Every language is a complex system, with three main functions: a. To communicate with other persons. b. To communicate with oneself, or, as we say, think. c. To mold one's whole outlook on life. As he uses words a person notices or neglects types of relationships and phenomena, he channels his reasoning, and builds the house of his consciousness. This conclusion has been largely neglected by the philosophers, but stands on unimpeachable evidence." Langer, Suzanne, *Philosophy in a New Key*, New York: New American Library, 1942, p. 32, quotes Ritchie's *The Natural History of the Mind*: "The essential act of thought is symbolization."

Is language essentially the substituting of symbols for experiences shared in some degree by two or more people?²⁷

27. Briggs, *op. cit.*, pp. 12ff., gives an excerpt from the autobiography of Helen Keller that points out the thrill of naming, of substituting a symbol for an experience. "As the cool stream gushed over one hand, she spelled into the other the word *water*, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motion of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that 'w-a-t-e-r' meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul; it is true there were barriers but they could in time be swept away. I left the wellhouse eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought."

In the process of substituting a symbol for an experience what criteria are

involved in the selection of a particular symbol? Is there any logical or correct symbol for given experience?²⁸

28. While facility of expression, vocabulary at one's disposal, etc. may help determine the initial substitution of symbol for experience, it is at best an arbitrary designation.

To what extent do symbols stand for conceptions of objects rather than for the actual objects?²⁹

29. Langer, *op. cit.*, p. 49: "Symbols are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conception of objects. In talking about things we have conceptions of them, not the things themselves; and it is the conceptions, not the things, that symbols directly 'mean'. Behavior toward conceptions is what words normally evoke; this is the typical process of thinking." Previously Langer pointed out (p. 45): "We may say that a certain symbol 'means' an object to a person, or that the person 'means' the object by the symbol. The first description treats meaning in the logical sense, the second in the psychological sense. The former takes the symbol as the key, and the latter the subject. So, the two most controversial kinds of meaning—the logical and the psychological—are distinguished and at the same time related to each other, by the general principle of viewing meaning as a function, not a property, of terms." This principle unites revelation and inspiration. This is essentially what Morris designates as the pragmatics of symbolism. Langer, (p. 64, 65) then warns, "The transformation which facts undergo when they are rendered as propositions is that relations in them are turned into something like objects." More will be said about this, perhaps, in a future article dealing with syntactics.

Will an increasing number of experiences (essentially the forming of new relationships by the process of metaphor) in the life of man call forth an increasing number of symbols?³⁰

30. Harris and Jarrett, *op. cit.* p. 53 point this out in listing vocabularies by age and occupation. Furthermore, Arabic contains over 6,000 words for camel, while other languages (Eskimo) have none. Again, whereas *Webster's Unabridged*, first edition (1864) contained but 114,000 words a revision (1890) contained 175,000, and in less than forty-five years a edition was published with more than 400,000 words. In this we see that actually, man talks and writes what he *does*.

May this also result in an increasing number of experiences subsumed under a given symbol?³¹

31. Thus the word "run" has sixty-seven different denotations listed in *Webster's Unabridged*, Second Edition. In the field of propaganda, and especially in advertising do we find what Fosdick, *op. cit.*, p. 55, calls the "cheapening of words."

Does it hold that the greater the denotational (plurisituational) value of a symbol, the less does it mean in any given situation?³²

32. Such value judgments as "wonderful," "terrific," "swell," "lousy," because of their constant use in so many different situations, soon begin to mean virtually nothing in any given situation. In politics we also find clichés like "Americanism," "democracy," "rugged individualism," "bureaucracy," etc. Fundamental Christianity has its share of threadbare words, such as "saved," "sanctified," "sin," "righteousness," "heaven," (words with such infinite plurisituational value as to render their meaning in any given place almost meaningless). What we desperately need is a study of what people mean by these words, in terms of what they *do* to their users, as well as what the users do with them. A step in the right direction is Ferm, Vergilius, *An Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945. One of the strongest indictments against fundamentalism is its threadbare jargon, an indication that the terms we inherit are not thought (or lived) through enough to perceive new meanings and relationships. For with new meanings and relationships there would come a demand for new labels. Here liberal and neo-orthodox theology have both bettered us to

a humiliating extent, with a greatly enlarged terminology. The unquestioning, dogmatic, absolutist credulity we fundamentalists so often display has, no doubt, been largely responsible for this impoverished jargon.

Contrariwise, do symbols become obsolete and disappear in proportion to the infrequency of experiences for which they were postulated? Can language in any case exceed the experience for which it was substituted?³³

33. Lee, Irving, *Language Habits in Human Affairs*, New York: Harper & Bros., 1941; p. 57: "Whenever we respond we abstract some details from a total situation, so that some others must be left out. Every way of looking brings with it some areas of blindness." Lee then quotes Bridgman, P. W., *The Nature of Physical Theory*, Princeton, N. J.: Princeton U. Press, 1936, pp. 20, 34: "An essential distinction between language and experience is that language separates out from the living matrix little bundles and freezes them."

In what sense can we think of a dictionary as being normative rather than descriptive? Is there any "correct" way of spelling, or pronouncing a given word? Is there any "correct" meaning for a word? Can a dictionary be any more than a compendium of the usages of spoken or written symbols of a select group of people at a particular moment in time?³⁴ Does anything in

34. *A Guide to Pronunciation* from *Webster's Unabridged*, Second Edition, p. 26, speaks of every kind of correctness implying a standard of measurement. "From the nature of the case, when the essential facts are considered, correctness of pronunciation (and spelling and meaning) must be a flexible form." Thus a pronunciation is correct when it is in actual use by a sufficient number of cultivated speakers. This is obviously elastic, depending both on knowledge—not always obtainable—of the number of users, and on the judgment as to the cultivation of the speakers." Thus to speak of the meaning of a word (or verse) is meaningless, for, in the last analysis, meaning is determined by interpretation, and interpretation is determined by the infinitude of our changing experiences. man's experience remain the same?³⁵ Is every experience unique in some

35. Keyser, Cassius J., *Mathematical Philosophy*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1922, p. 181: "For the most obvious, the most embracing, the most poignant and the most tragic fact in the pageant we call the world is the fact of *Change*." Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 73: "At the heart of the analysis of the atom in modern physics is the sense of a perpetual, energetic 'mad dance'; a hurrying, oscillating, vibrating existence at submicroscopic levels. Thus, our 'primitive atomistic view of a dead, indestructible, solid 'matter' must be replaced by a view which emphasizes the *process* character of the world." Now, for theologians to posit a changeless, immutable God (for if He changed, it would have to be a change for the worse, since He is perfect) may be required by Aristotelian logic, but as long as man is changing then God's relations with man must necessarily change, if from no other point of view than man's. *Webster's, op. cit.*, p. 23: "English, like other living languages, is in a process of constant change." Now if language is in a constant flux, would this not require that all experience be also in flux, since language is but a reflection of experience?

respects?³⁶ Do all of man's experiences inter-relate in some respects?³⁷

36. If so, it would be impossible to symbolize it "accurately" or "correctly." The most we can work for is as adequate a symbolization as possible, in terms of communication. Thus it becomes more meaningful to speak of adequacy rather than correctness.
37. Keyser, C. J., *Mole Philosophy and Other Essays*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1927, p. 132: "There is indeed nothing that admits of *complete* description, for things are so interrelated that however much we may say of a given thing, there ever remains more to say of it; and complete description of one object would involve—in fact it would *be*—complete description of every other."

If all things interrelate, then there are, among all things, similarities or bases for analogy. This being the case, there are no complete contradictions.

If man's language is always finite in that it is a compendium of symbols substituted for his cumulative experiences, in what sense can we construe any language to be absolute? If by the symbol, "absolute," we signify immutability, self-sufficiency, or all-inclusiveness, can we apply the symbol to human language?³⁸ Can we apply "absolute" to concepts?³⁹ Would not the symbol

38. Strong, Augustus H., *Systematic Theology*, Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1907, p. 9, conceives of infinity as implying the absence of all limit, and absolute as implying entire self-sufficiency. Ferm, *op. cit.*, conceives of absolute as "self-sufficient, unconditional, independent, not relative." Now to apply "absolute" to God is one thing. But to apply the same attribute to revelation, a medium of communication between God and his finite creation, and itself dependent on interpretation to be meaningful, would equate revelation with the Revealer. Unless God has accommodated His revelation to a medium of communication comprehensible to man, how can we say there has been either communication or revelation? If God did not reveal to communicate, then why did He give us the Scriptures? Eugene Nida, perhaps the world's outstanding linguist in the area of Bible translation writes: (and, contrary to Dr. Nicole, I believe Dr. Nida knew what he was saying) "The only absolute in Christianity is the triune God. Anything which involves man, who is finite and limited, must of necessity be limited, and hence relative. Biblical relativism is an obligatory feature of our incarnational religion, for without it we would either absolutize human institutions or relativize God." Cf. book review by H. Wade Seaford, Jr., in *Gordon Review*, May, 1955, p. 74, of Nida's *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*, p. 282.

39. As Langer, *op. cit.*, p. 49ff., points out, "concepts are abstract forms embodied in conceptions: their bare presentation may be approximated by so-called 'abstract thought,' but in ordinary mental life they no more figure as naked factors than skeletons are seen walking the street." P. 75: "The abstractions made by the ear and eye—the forms of direct perception—are our most primitive instruments of intelligence. They are genuine symbolic materials, media of understanding, by whose office we apprehend a world of *things*, and of events that are the histories of things. We recognize the elements of this sensuous analysis in all sorts of combination; we can use them imaginatively, to conceive prospective changes in familiar scenes. Visual forms—lines, colors, proportions, etc.—are just as capable of *articulation*, i. e. of complex combination, as words. But the laws that govern this sort of articulation are altogether different from the laws of syntax that govern language. The most radical difference is that *visual forms are not discursive*. They do not present their constituents successively, but simultaneously, so the relations determining a visual structure are grasped in one act of vision." If Langer's analysis is true, then absolute concepts would necessarily be non-discursive, and therefore non-Scriptural.

"absolute," if applied to language, likewise apply to the experience for which the language stands, as well as to man who experiences? Does Scripture itself demand that it be conceived of in absolute terms?⁴⁰

40. In none of the passages cited by Dr. Nicole, nor in any passage in Scripture does there seem to be any warrant for either words or concepts to be understood as "entirely self-sufficient, infinite, immutable, or all-inclusive." Now some will maintain perhaps that by "absolute" truth they mean that the Scripture was given by God "without error in the original manuscripts." They will further maintain that it has been preserved for us without any substantial change in any essential doctrine—or doctrine essential to one's faith. In answer, is not communication a social act, in which adequacy, rather

than infallibility is the rule? Since no word, much less verse or chapter will mean precisely the same thing to any two people, doesn't the phrase, "without error" become inapplicable to the doctrine of inspiration? Furthermore, since we have no original manuscripts, is not, in the last analysis, the construction of the text always an approximation? Finally, what do we mean when we say "essential doctrine"? May the teaching concerning baptism range all the way from little or no significance (in the case of the Quakers) to the utmost importance (in the case of the Campbellite Christians)? In which of our modern translations do we say we have the "absolute" truth of the Word of God? If I paraphrase or illustrate a given verse, does it remain the "absolute" truth? In what sense is my preaching then "absolute truth"? Are our translations into some 1100 different tongues all the "absolute truth"? Perhaps here we see some of the immeasurable difficulty attending the insistence that we conceive of Scripture in absolute terms.

If the truth of Scripture is relative rather than absolute, or probable rather than certain, what becomes of faith?⁴¹ To what extent does Scripture

41. But a cursory reflection of our daily activities provides ample proof that we exert faith on the basis of probability ranging from slim possibility to the highest degree of certainty or probability. Now in our positing God as an absolute, do we not exercise a faith similar to that exercised by a scientist when he inductively postulates a hypothesis which for the moment he cannot "prove", but is necessary to explain certain evidence? Is not this what a done by theologians who, in citing evidence for God's existence postulate a proposition, which they then attempt to prove by the process of deductive logic? Cf. Carnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 119ff.

become true in leading us to the incarnate Word of God?⁴² Now is it the

42. To the degree that it becomes, through the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, its Author, *in conjunction with* the volitional application of the entire believer, *incarnate* in the life of the believer. Thus what Scripture *means* to the Christian is not so much what he can endorse in a creed, or what he can think or speak concerning it, but rather what the Scriptures themselves *do* to the believer, in terms of habitual practice. (E.g., I Cor. 13 is true for me to the extent that I embody the love of the incarnate Word in my own life.) Cf. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. v, Preface, quoting Charles Pierce: "To determine the meaning of any sign we have simply to determine what habits it produces." Jesus concludes His Sermon on the Mount: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21). And James (2:17): "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." The Christian's supreme purpose in life, ordering and unifying his world, together with his recognition of the validity of special revelation as instrumental toward that purpose, would demarcate this proposed view from existentialism. Cf. Spier, J. M., *Christianity and Existentialism*, translated by David H. Freeman, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1953, Part II, Chap. 3.

purpose of Scripture, as a sign, to point us to God, who has revealed Himself perfectly in the form of His Son, Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God?⁴³

43. Throughout the New Testament, and particularly in the writings of John, do we note this as the supreme purpose of Christ's coming, indicating that the written word of the Old Testament was not sufficient to give us a clear conception of God? To say that the supreme purpose of the incarnate Word of God was to redeem mankind is to fail to see redemption as essentially revelation, a revelation of God to which the entire Old Testament had pointed, and to which the entire New Testament looks back. Thus the purpose of the Word of God, above everything else, was to reveal the Father so perfectly as to woo the allegiance of men. Cf. Trench, Richard C., *The Fitness of Holy Scripture for Unfolding the Spiritual Life of Man*, 2nd ed. rev., Cambridge: Macmillan, 1947, pp. 17, 18.

To the degree that a sign calls attention to itself does it fail in its essential purpose of communicating a revelation? If such a sign becomes pathic to the degree that it calls attention to itself, then is man's devotion to the sign rather than to the revelation (God in Christ) to that degree pathological?⁴⁴

44. Kuist, *op cit.*, p. 125 quotes Trench: "Holy Scripture is the history of men in a constitution; a history of men not seeking relations with God, but men having such relations, and whose task is now to believe these relations, and to maintain them." Kuist continues: "Scripture is a presentation of the histories of souls, souls who have responded or who have failed to respond adequately to revelation." Kuist then quotes E. P. Dickie's *Revelation and Response*, p. 253: "In Jesus we see the perfect response, and, because of that, also the perfect revelation." Some will perhaps object that the Scriptures are a record of God's revelation, not a history of man's response. But how can we separate the two; isn't Scripture both? Rather than demand that one or the other have the primacy, why not ask, how do they complement each other? In regard to pathological devotion to sign, wasn't this the besetting sin of the Pharisees? Jn. 5:39, 40: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." Their very zeal for Scripture, Kuist points out, led men into a bondage from which Jesus sought to release them (p. 131). That this is all too common an experience today is well attested and illustrated by Kuist, citing the testimony of Leslie Stephen (*The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, by Frederik W. Maitland, New York: B. B. Putnam and Sons, 1906, pp. 133, 134): "My own experience is, I imagine, a common one. When I ceased to accept the teachings of my youth, it was not so much a process of giving up beliefs, as of discovering that I had never really believed. The contrast between the genuine convictions that guide and govern conduct, and the propositions which we were taught to repeat in church, when once realized, were too glaring. One belonged to the world of realities, and the other to the world of dreams. I was not discovering that my creed was false, but that I had never really believed it. I had unconsciously imbibed the current phraseology; but the formulae belonged to the superficial stratum of my thought instead of to the fundamental convictions." Significantly, Rapoport, *op. cit.*, p. 15, points out that it is a much more difficult matter to enlarge one's experience to fit a label than to apply a label to a given experience" (or to inherit a galaxy of labels in the form of religious jargon).

Is not the final argument for or against Christ not the Bible *per se*, but rather the degree to which Christians incarnate the living Word of God?⁴⁵ Is it

45. Thus we love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength when we have so incarnated the love of Christ as to produce habitual giving of ourselves to Him. Likewise we love our neighbors as ourselves when they recognize in us habitual concern commensurate with that we devote to ourselves. Fosdick, *op. cit.*, p. 191: "Who, then, killed Jesus? These men (Pharisees) killed him, respectable people, conscientious people in whom religion had stiffened into hard forms. Have you ever seen a river choked by its own ice? That is the perennial truth about religion. It is living water, without which no man can live well, but it freezes into hard forms of organization, creed, ritual and custom and then the free-flowing stream is blocked by its own congealing."

possible that our recognition of our own part in making the word of God the Word of God can be a real boon to Christianity?⁴⁶

46. From the standpoint of denominationalism, this emphasizes that the truth of the Scriptures is different, in some respects, for every interpreter, depending on what it "means" (does) to him. This emphasizes, in turn, that every Christian in himself constitutes the basis for a "denomination." Ought

not emphasis shift to the invariance of our experiences, so that we unite on a practical, rather than a theoretical level? Do we realize that the selection of similarities or differences in our interpretation of Scripture as compared with others is largely determined by our purpose? It may be well, for example, to emphasize the differences between the Roman Catholic interpretation and my own, in order that I might feel burdened sufficiently to enlighten them. But it takes a recognition of basic similarities between the Roman point of view and my own, for me to approach him on behalf of Christ. During World War II many GI's discovered they could worship in the same chapel with those representing widely diverse denominations, and actually be blessed. The urgency of their need for worship cut across sectarian lines in a manner next to miraculous. But once dismissed from the service, the lines were found to crystalize once again. Are we clergymen mainly responsible for this increasing fragmentation of Protestantism, based on an emphasis of our differences rather than basic areas of agreement? Is the heart of schism always purely doctrinal? Perhaps it is here, in the probing of our own motives, that much of the solution toward a more united front may lie. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man this is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3).

THOUGHTS ON INSPIRATION

MORRIS A. INCH

It is the purpose of this article to emphasize the importance and acceptability of affirming the infallibility of the Scriptures. Dr. Curtis has pressed his claims of relativism of communication to the Bible. (Note the September, 1955, issue of the *Gordon Review*.) Dr. Nicole set himself to answer the challenge by affirming certain internal and external arguments for the infallibility of the Word, and, in passing, showing the untenable character of the philosophic view of relativism. (Note the December, 1955 issue of the *Gordon Review*.) The propositions which follow assume a knowledge of these two articles.

1. The difficulty, even the impossibility, of absolutely exact communication is well taken by Dr. Curtis. What one says and another understands him to say is conditioned by personal experience and emotional involvement and is never perfectly equated. A wife and her mechanic husband are discussing automobiles. They use the same terms. The wife thinks of a means of locomotion, visualized by upholstery, finish, tires, and the place where the motor is assumed to exist. However, the husband pictures distributor, points, carburetor, crankshaft, and other component parts familiar to the mechanic's work.

2. This limitation of communication referred to in the above paragraph should not be conceived as a negation of the power of communication. The approximation of concept is normally a high degree of equa-

tion. The term "automobile" carries much the same idea to all those who are at all familiar with the English language. The theory which would trace most of man's problems to the matter of communication is suspect. It fails to take into consideration either the depraved condition of subjects, or the high degree of equation achieved in normal conversation.

3. The Bible is a unique book in its formation: "All Scripture is God-breathed . . ." (II Timothy 3:16). Dr. Nicole has demonstrated that the composition of the inspired text is such that we must affirm that it is veritably the Word of God. The Bible does not merely record the incidents in the life of great religious men as the Liberal theologian often states. It does not merely contain or communicate the Word of God as the Neo-Orthodox or Neo-Liberal professes. It *is* the Word of God. It has been claimed that the conveyance of concepts is not seriously limited by the problem of communication. In addition, the Bible in a unique sense is not chained by the relativism of communication.

It seems to be a necessary corollary of the veracity of God that the Bible is infallible. A deviation at this point is not only an action contrary to faith, but runs counter to the "Supreme Mind and Intellect." God, in His wisdom, has provided an inspired text for man. We can see in part the need of such a text, and demonstrate how the text stands up against its critics. Men have thought to strike a death-blow to the Scriptures through ideology and/or suppression, but the Word has lived on. "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away" (Mark 13:31).

The author does not see a logical stop short of infallibility on which the Christian scholar can rest. He feels that the tests of philosophy and history make this all too evident. However, this subject demands more consideration than can be accorded in this article, and is left to the evaluation of others.

4. The Bible is unique in its method of communication: ". . . they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14). We have said little by stating that the Scriptures are infallible, unless we assume that man can understand what has had Divine initiative and protection from error. *Proposition Two* is relevant at this point: "The limitation of communication . . . should not be conceived as a negation of the power of communication." Certain of the most severe critics of the trustworthiness of the Scripture have produced what are, by and large, excellent commentaries on the Bible. The concepts of Scripture have not been too great an obstacle for their analytic genius. In addition to this fact, the Holy Spirit heightens the understanding of those with spiritual sensitiveness. The humble and devout reader of the Bible may have deeper and more vital comprehension of Biblical truth than the greatest

of world scholars who lacks in spiritual sensitivity. We shall proceed to define *Proposition Four* by way of several considerations stated in the negative.

a. That Biblical communication is unique does not mean that man has complete knowledge of any concept of Scripture: "For we know in part . . ." (I Corinthians 13:9). The term "heaven" brings delight and anticipation to us but we do not begin to comprehend the extent of its meaning. However, this does not negate the absolute character of usage or the ability of the Holy Spirit to communicate correctly. A child, if taught correctly, does not have to re-learn facts but fills new meaning into trustworthy concepts.

b. That Biblical communication is unique does not mean that regeneration is the sole prerequisite of understanding all the truth revealed in God's Word. This conclusion would run counter to the Biblical concept of Christian growth, and our own experience.

c. That Biblical communication is unique does not mean that all men will interpret Scripture in exactly the same way. We observe that there remain areas of difference between those who would understand the Word of God. The author does not profess to comprehend all that is involved in this predicament. However, the following considerations may help illustrate some of the areas from which difference of interpretation may arise:

(1) The lack of knowledge of the Biblical tools of communication. There are insights which come to us from the study of the original language of the Scriptures, and the periods in which the Bible was produced. Ignorance of these and other factors produce and accentuate differences in interpretation.

(2) The lack of spiritual sensitiveness. Inasmuch as this matter has been commented on above, we shall but mention it in this context.

(3) Extra-Biblical sources applied as formative factors. Whenever a second source of authority is added to that of the Bible, confusion results. This addition may be in the form of a second "inspired" book, an inner light, a self-ordained prophet, the accrueement of tradition, an infallible Church, or the investment of experience. The existence of these or other extra-Biblical sources tend to bias the interpreter toward areas of compromise between the Bible and the other source of authority.

(4) The effort to express spiritual truths in human categories. The heresies of the early Church dealt primarily with the person of Christ. The testimony of Scripture seemed, and rightly so, to indicate that Christ was perfectly human and perfectly Divine. Every effort to resolve these apparently contradictory statements resulted in heresy. There seems to be an inherent danger in expressing Divine revelation in systematic categories of knowledge. At least in some instances when infinite truth has been analyzed into finite compartments of understanding great injustice has been done to the revealed concepts.

(5) Satanic perversion. It seems to be more popular to talk about Satanic influence today, but the Bible has never ceased warning against the power and purpose of the evil one: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). Much of the world's condition, including some confusion of thought can likely be laid to the fact that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:17).

d. That Biblical communication is unique does not mean that we are unable to illustrate some of the factors involved. We observe that persons with like experience and interests are better able to communicate successfully. We also note that a person with exceptional ability can bridge to a greater degree the communication barriers which are common to man. It seems logical to assume that the person with spiritual interest, all other things being equal, will be most receptive to spiritual truth. It also appears evident that the Holy Spirit should be supremely capable in overcoming the normal relativism of communication. There are likely further observations which are relevant here, but these are meant only to be illustrative.

Let us recall in closing the words of Gaussen: "From all that we have read, it results that there are in the world only two schools, or but two religions: that which places the Bible above everything; and that which places something above the Bible."¹

1. Gaussen, S. R. L., *Theopneusty*, New York: John S. Taylor and Company, 1844, p. 399.

PERSONALIA

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Richard K. Curtis, Ph. D., is Associate Professor of Speech and Homiletics at Bethel College and Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. See "Personalialia," Vol. 1, No. 3, September, 1955, p. 110.

Thomas H. Leith, M. A., is Chairman of the Division of Science at Gordon College. See "Personalialia," Vol. I, No. 1, February, 1955, p. 30.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

The Theology of Calvin, by Wilhelm Niesel, translated by Harold Knight. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956. 254pp. \$4.00.

Now available in English, Wilhelm Niesel's study of Calvin's theology, a kind of watershed thesis when it first appeared on the Continent 18 years ago, introduces English and American readers not only to Niesel's interpretation of the Reformer, but to the critical scholarship of the last two generations in Europe. Niesel contends that all previous efforts at understanding the "dominating form", or the "governing intention", or the "fundamental content" of Calvin's thought have collapsed because all have equally failed to recognize that "the problems of his theology do not arise from questions of structure nor from those of content, but from the fact that it makes a serious attempt to be theology. This means: in Calvin's doctrine it is a question of the content of all contents—the living God" (p. 19). Niesel proceeds to discover that pervasive to all of Calvin's theological interest is a concern with the Incarnation of Jesus Christ—God revealed in the flesh—the theme controlling both form and content of his writings.

This refreshing thesis elucidates much incidentally in various areas of the Reformer's thought. Space permitting we could specifically applaud some of Niesel's insights into Calvin's doctrine of the law of God and sin, of the sacraments, of the assurance of election (the most thorough treatment of any I know) to mention only the most memorable. Furthermore these insights are liberally documented from the source-texts usually with a magistral awareness of context and consequence.

Our enthusiasm is somewhat restrained, however, by the strong tincture of contemporary theology inserted into this account of Calvin. Niesel, who claims Karl Barth "above all" as his mentor, stands prominent among those scholars, e.g., E. Dowey, Peter Barth, W. Kolhaus, who seek to find in Calvin an activist notion of a transcendent God concerning whose "revelation" the church witnesses in antithetical predicates. With these men he stresses the illumination of the Holy Spirit as that which gives to the Bible its authority as the Word of God. By such a reading of Calvin, Niesel, throughout the second chapter of his work, confuses the objective authority and intrinsic "life" of the Scriptures, which Calvin abundantly acknowledges in all his writings, with the internal work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a man, a prerequisite to a sinner's recognition of that authority. (Cf. pp. 25, 28, 31-39.) Characteristically he argues, in often irrelevant fashion, against the presence of a "dictation" theory of verbal inspiration. The more recent work of Edmund Dowey, *The Doctrine of God in Calvin's Theology* (Columbia University Press, 1952), is an adequate rebuttal on this last point from one having affinities with Niesel's own theological preferences, not to mention the classic treatments by James Bannerman and B. B. Warfield. As a corrective to his misinterpretation of Calvin's statement about God's speaking, viz., "il a begayé" (p. 32), the masterful comment of Schilder, certainly available to Niesel, would have sufficed (K. Schilder, *Zur Begriffsgeschichte des Paradoxon* usw., J. H. Kok, 1933, p. 423).

With this questionable interpretation of Calvin's doctrine of revelation before him, the critical reader might ask whether or not what Niesel understands by the Incarnation is the same as Calvin's concept of "the ultimate theme of Scripture." Although Niesel proves with apparent approbation the harmony of Calvin's doctrine with the Chalcedonian formula, his own rendering seems somewhat to suppress the purpose of the Incarnation, viz. the mediatorial work of satisfaction and salvation.

A great instrumental value of this book lies in the fact that the author has footnoted a list of recent European works relevant to the subjects of chapters two through fifteen. Even here the almost absolute exclusion of classic or contemporary orthodox comment is an unfortunate error. Niesel's zeal to save Calvin from the Calvinists causes an oversight here to the detriment of his work. The task still facing Calvin research is not primarily that of adjusting Calvin to any current school of theology, but the ticklish historical one of plausibly evaluating the Reformer's thought according to the analogy of his own statements and in the light of the formative elements of his own culture. From this task, Niesel, as well as some of those whom he so ably criticizes, deviates in order to exploit the *complexio oppositorum* in Calvin's theology.

—Thomas Grady Spires

Our Reasonable Faith, by Herman Bavinck, translated by Henry Zylstra. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1956. 568 pp. \$6.95.

In offering the American evangelical public a translation of another of Herman Bavinck's works, the publisher deserves congratulations for his confidence in that body of readers, for Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei* (the title of the Dutch issue), although intended and billed as a popular treatment of his four-volume *Dogmatiek*, compresses into one fat tome much of the theological finesse, the comparative and historical flair demonstrated by the late Amsterdam theologian in his more technical writings. Not only does this book comprehend the entire range of revealed truth, but it preserves enough detail—Biblical, philosophical, etc.—to exhibit, albeit in somewhat restricted compass, the wide and profound reach of Bavinck's interest and ability. The most pedantic reader can be stimulated and satisfied by this digest.

In the traditional order of Reformed dogmatics, the book begins with a discussion of the nature of God's self-revelation, comprising in this case eight chapters. Here, as throughout, Bavinck manages to give old truths a fresh statement relevant to contemporary currents of thought. Special revelation is, of course, a present focus of debate, and several masterful chapters are valuable reading in this area, but perhaps most trenchant is the discussion of general revelation.

The exposition of the contents of that revelation is presented according to two complementary methods, called "theological" and "anthropological" by Bavinck. And here, in the larger section of the book, by merging these methods, he manifests more than a merely academic talent. Far from any sterile intellectualism, this work shows at its height Bavinck's vigorous piety. Again and again the religious value of "abstract" doctrines is enforced, all to the benefit of the lay-reader and scholar (e.g., p. 136f., p. 159f., p. 328).

Adapted to the understanding of the average, educated Christian, this is nevertheless definitely not theology by spoon-feeding, but strong food for mind and heart.

—Thomas Grady Spires

An Approach to Christian Education, edited by Rubert E. Davies. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956. 159pp. \$4.75.

A few words will help explain the context out of which this work comes. Religious education is given throughout England during the period of compulsory education, i.e., five through fifteen years of age. This instruction is under "local control," and is often given in accordance with an agreed syllabus such as the *Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching For Schools*.

It is the belief of the Methodist contributors to this publication that

the existence of religious syllabi does not break down the dichotomy of religious and secular in the school. The deeper problem, and that which they speak to, is how to relate Christianity to the respective departments of study. They emphasize the truth that "facts" are not taught without presuppositions, literary gems without understanding the faith that brought them into being, or material without organizing principles.

The writers wrestle with the problem of introducing dogmatic Christianity into the arena of search for truth. Their propositions are conditioned by the fact that they reject "Fundamentalism" and "uncritical Liberalism" alike. The reader who comes with a different concept of Christianity will have to evaluate even more carefully the various recommendations.

Furthermore, this work runs into the same pitfall common to so many of the current American studies of religion in public education, viz., there is little effort made to illustrate by concrete suggestions the principles propounded. In the last analysis the "how" of breaking down the dichotomy of religious and secular must be carefully exhausted. —M. Inch

The Middle East, Its Religion and Culture, by Edward J. Jurji. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956. 159 pp. \$3.00.

This is a most timely book about that part of the world and those peoples whose troubled existence and potential danger for the rest of the world now holds the attention of all nations. The author is writing not only in the field of his specialty, as Professor of Islamics and Comparative Religion at Princeton Seminary, but also of his native land and people.

The first two chapters deal with the "essential elements in the contemporary Middle East." The author finds that the present tensions have risen not simply from cultural and diplomatic issues, but from "spiritual ineptitude," the failure on the part of Islam, Judaism and Christianity alike to understand the deep spiritual concerns of the others. The heart of the book sets before the reader the spiritual principles, aims and history of Islam, Judaism and the little understood divisions of Eastern Christianity as they have influenced each other through the years. This section concludes with a look at the impact of modern western Protestant missionary activity on the Islamic cultural pattern.

The concluding chapter, "The Middle East and World Peace," is presented not so much as a plan but as a plea. Islam, Christianity and Judaism once acted in unison; may they do so again. This chapter points up the deep complexity of the problem by its very failure to acknowledge the real historical and religious antagonisms of the three religions. That superficially the three may be said to have a common origin, aim and faith, monotheism, obscures

the fact that they are at the same time essentially incompatible. This is not to decry Dr. Jurji's plea, for in fact it is the only way to a solution. It is rather to urge that these great differences be faced as reasons not for warfare and separation but for appreciation, compassion and love.

—*Philip C. Johnson*

The Gospels, an Expanded Translation, by Kenneth S. Wuest. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956. 320 pp. \$3.50

The best method of translating is an old and continuing problem. In translating the Bible almost every way of bringing the original text into another language has been tried. In English, there are some who seek simply to represent the thought of the original, and we have the polished prose of Arthur Way or the colloquial sentences of J. B. Phillips. Others endeavor to approximate the original words and phrases in their English equivalents. Still others, by various devices seek to bring out some of the inflections and subtle shades of meaning for which our own idiom has no real equivalent. This may be seen in the Williams translation in which the force of the verb tense is particularly stressed. Dr. Wuest's translation carries this last method to its extreme. The expanded translation of the Gospels abandons proper English in an attempt to convey as nearly as possible all of the nuances and emphases of the Greek. Dr. Wuest does remarkably well in attempting that which is in the final sense impossible. If this translation is used, as suggested by the author, as a companion to a standard translation, it will be of real value. It performs the function of a running commentary by indicating many of the basic meanings, the exact force and the emphasis of the text as no translation into ordinary English could do.

We applaud Dr. Wuest for his efforts and look forward to the succeeding volumes which will complete the expanded translation of the New Testament, but we have several criticisms and suggestions to make. Although the author claims to follow Nestle's Greek text there are places, such as John 5:4 and 8:1-11, where, with no footnote to indicate it, he follows the Textus Receptus. In endeavoring, tortuously at times, to convey an exact English equivalent, why does Dr. Wuest simply transliterate such words as "denarius" which mean nothing to the average reader? Again, why is it necessary to begin each Gospel with the very same introduction and the same four rules for Bible study? Once would be enough. These are offered as suggestions for the coming volumes which we sincerely look forward to receiving.

—*Philip C. Johnson*

The Bible as History, by Werner Keller. New York: Wm. Morrow and Co., 1956. xxv and 452 pp. Illustrated. \$5.95.

Dr. Werner Keller is neither archeologist, theologian nor Biblical scholar; he is a journalist. More specifically, he is one of Germany's foremost journalists in the scientific field. His avowed purpose in this work is to share with "those who read the Bible and those who do not" the exciting discoveries by which modern scientific investigation has made the world of the Bible live again. The book has many of the virtues and some of the weaknesses of the journalist's art. The virtues, however, far outbalance the weaknesses.

Here is a most stimulating and lively book on Biblical backgrounds. From the misty past of the Antediluvian era to the Apostolic age the Biblical world passes before one's eyes. The author's purpose is to present a "confirmation of the Book of Books" and he brings from the vast storehouse of archeological discovery innumerable items not only to confirm in fact various statements of Scripture but to enlighten the reader in a multitude of aspects of Biblical life. The geographical, historical, social and cultural world of Israel and her neighbors comes clearly into focus. Characters, once only names, become flesh and blood as we enter into their houses, eat with them, work and play with them. This has been attempted before by a number of authors, but these men, specialists in their field of archeology or Bible, have lacked the ability to present in such sparkling prose the story they wish to tell.

At the same time there are some of the journalist's weaknesses. Dr. Keller's attention is often on the interesting story rather than on the more important but sober fact. He is dependent upon the authorities he consults and although he sometimes reserves his opinion, as on the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, he more often states as a settled fact, for instance the date of the Exodus, a matter which is still in a state of great uncertainty. He will sometimes state as a startling truth what is simply the idea of one man, far from generally received, for example Parrot's identification of the ziggurat of Babylon as *the* Tower of Babel, or the flood layer at Ur as being the Biblical flood. He is also guilty of climaxing a story by stating less than the truth, as when he tells of "the most important find in the history of Christian archeology," the finding of the tomb of Peter in the Vatican. The very careful language of the Pope in which he refrained from giving a clear yes or no to the question of the identity of the tomb does not lend itself so well to a news story.

Prepared by a recognition of these weaknesses, the reader will be amply rewarded by the excellent presentation of the archeological materials as a whole. He will be intrigued by the brief glances at the treasures of Nuzu,

Mari and Ras-es-Shamra to go further in studying these great discoveries. There are also a number of fine photographs and some excellent diagrams. With the reservations mentioned before, we heartily recommend *The Bible as History* to the student as a first step in the direction of a life-long study and to the general reader as a most readable account of the new look into the past that has served to bring the world of the Bible to light and life.

—Philip C. Johnson

The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth, by G. C. Berkouwer. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956. 414 pp. \$4.95. (Also London: Paternoster Press. 18/—).

The present volume by the well-known Dutch theologian represents the apex of a series of volumes in which he gave extensive attention to the theology of Karl Barth: *Faith and Revelation in Recent German Theology* (his doctoral dissertation, 1932), *Karl Barth* (1936, second edition 1937), *The Problem of Biblical Criticism* (1938), *Barthianism and Catholicism* (his inaugural lecture at Amsterdam, 1940), *Karl Barth and Infant Baptism* (1947), not to speak of his *Studies in Dogmatics*, so well informed on present trends in theology.

In all of these works Berkouwer was sharply critical of Barth, but the title of the present volume may cause one to wonder whether his attitude has now changed. After two brief chapters in which the importance of Karl Barth and the general significance of grace in his theology are set forth, Berkouwer proceeds to show how the keynote of triumphant grace is operative in Barth's doctrines of creation, election, reconciliation, and eschatology, and in his polemics with Roman Catholicism. Throughout these chapters, although written with an evident concern to understand Barth and trace out the master theme of his theology, it is apparent that Berkouwer entertains views vastly different from those of Barth. This becomes even clearer in the five properly critical chapters, in which with remarkable sharpness the profoundly unsatisfactory and unscriptural character of many of Barth's positions is demonstrated. His view of sin as "chaos" at "the boundary of existence" imperils the reality of demons and of evil itself. His concept of election, his denial of personal immortality, his irresistible leaning to universalism in spite of his ultimate denial of the restoration of all things, and several other points are singled out for incisive criticism, particularly in terms of a direct appeal to the testimony of Scripture. Thus, while the title would seem to indicate a commendation of Barth—for who could wish to have his theology characterized by a more desirable keynote than the "triumph of grace"?—the contents of the book reveals a sympathetic approach issuing in devastating

strictures affecting vital points. Why then entitle the book in that way? Berkouwer points out in a special chapter that all the ways of emphasizing the triumph of grace are not necessarily in accordance with Scripture, nor do they necessarily magnify properly the grace of God in the final analysis. Marcionism, antinomianism, perfectionism, and universalism have been in the history of doctrine misguided and spurious attempts to emphasize God's grace: these have all resulted in catastrophic error and ultimately in a disparagement of grace. Barthian theology with its stress on monergism and triumphant grace is not safeguarded from error, not even from aggravated errors, into which, on Berkouwer's own showing, it has repeatedly fallen. This consideration may technically justify the title, although it must be confessed that at best it is misleading.

It may be a matter of surprise that in so comprehensive a volume little is said of Barth's view of history, and almost nothing of his position on the inspiration of the Scriptures. On these matters Berkouwer had expressed emphatic criticism in earlier works, particularly in *The Problem of Biblical Criticism*, and he may have found it undesirable to repeat himself. Since, however, the reader who is limited to English has no access to this material, he might be surprised at this lacuna.

We would wish to commend Berkouwer most heartily for the thoroughness of his acquaintance with Barth's own writings and those to which he gave rise; for the gracious and understanding spirit with which he approached Barth; for the care with which, throughout the book, he based his criticisms on Barth's direct statements rather than on inferences based on them; for the insight which he showed into the relationship between the various aspects of Barth's teaching; for the sharpness and decisive character of his strictures; for his firm adherence throughout to the Scriptures and the orthodox Reformed faith. In view of the quality and tone of this work it is possible to understand that Barth should have wished to retract his remark, made in a burst of ill temper, that the Neo-Calvinists of the Netherlands "are men with hearts cold, hard, and devoid of understanding, to whom one should give no heed."¹ In the preface of the tenth volume of his *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, Barth writes, "... The great book dealing with me and particularly my dogmatics, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, by my colleague of Amsterdam, G. C. Berkouwer, who belongs to this group, was written with such care, graciousness, and Christian *aequitas*, in spite of serious reservations and criticisms, that I—in the hope that there might be others of his kind there—wish now to withdraw the harsh words which I had then uttered. . . ."²

1 Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, III/4 (1951), p.x.

2 Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, IV/2 (1955), p.x.

The translation into English made by Harry R. Boer is very good. The printing has been well executed with comparatively few errors. We wish to congratulate the publishers for having preserved the full documentation in the footnotes. Some of them, in which Berkouwer takes issue with Cornelius Van Til, have been replaced by a special appendix (pp. 384-393) not found in the Dutch and in which the whole matter is summarized. It is also noteworthy that the English edition is provided with a careful list of works cited, with a list of Barth's works available in English, and with indices of Scripture, of proper names, and of subjects, all of which are not in the original.

—Roger Nicole

SURVEY OF SIGNIFICANT ARTICLES

THOMAS H. LEITH

American Association of University Professors Bulletin, Winter. W. E. Drake discusses "Education and the Anti-Philosophical Attitude" and there is an article on faculty-trustee relations.

American Scientist, January. A. H. Snell, "A Survey of the Particles of Physics"; J. R. Joyce, "Psychology in the Mid-Twentieth Century"; W. J. Cunningham, "Automation"; and J. S. Weiner, "Physical Anthropology . . . An Appraisal."

Atlantic, January. W. H. Auden discusses "Making and Judging Poetry."

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, November. H. A. Meyerhoff, "The Plight of Science Education." E. W. Sinnott discusses "Science and the Human Spirit" in the December issue.

Baptist Quarterly, October. Articles on "The Significance of Rudolph Bultmann" by W. E. Hough and on "Theology and Logic" by E. O. White.

Bibliotheca Sacra, October-December. F. E. Gaebelin, "Arnold Toynbee and the Jews." Continues J. Free, "Archeology and Biblical Criticism."

British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, November. G. J. Whitrow, "The Study of the Philosophy of Science."

Catholic Biblical Quarterly, October. D. M. Stanley, "The Conception of Salvation in the Synoptic Gospels."

Christian Century, November 14. F. C. Neff, "How Moral Is Secular Education?" On Dec. 12, T. A. Gill begins a series on Southeast Asia while the issue of Jan. 2 has the first article in a series on cults and sects—this one on "Psychiana."

Christian Scholar, December. E. Carson Blake, "Wanted: Christian Scholars."

Christianity Today, November 25. E. J. Young, "The Dead Sea Scrolls"; Dec. 10, G. H. Clark, "Incarnation: Fact or Theory?" and G. W. Bromiley, "Barth's Doctrine of the Bible."

Concordia Theological Monthly, November. C. S. Meyer, "The Functions of the State." He also discusses "The Role of the Church in the Political Order" in December.

Current History, January. An issue on Communist China.

Eternity, December. R. W. Lazear, "Fundamentalism's Facades." W. R. Martin continues on "Adventist Theology vs. Historical Orthodoxy" in the January number.

Fortune, January. Frances Bello writes on modern atomic physics.

- Free University Quarterly*, September. G. Kuiper, "Social Distinction Between Leaders and Group Members."
- Harper's*, January. J. W. Gardner discusses the importance of increasing the supply of educated leaders in all areas of society.
- His*, December. W. Peterson, "The Christian Attitude Toward the State."
- International Affairs*, Fall. C. E. Carrington discusses the growth of an educated class in mission areas.
- Interpretation*, October. R. F. Boyd discusses Mormonism.
- Journal of Philosophy*. On Oct. 25 and Nov. 8 there are discussions on Natural Law. The latter also contains a symposium on Existentialism. The Dec. 20 issue has R. Handy on "The Naturalistic 'Reduction' of Ethics to Science."
- Journal of Religion*, October. R. E. Cushman writes on "Barth's Attack Upon Cartesianism and the Future of Theology" and F. Sontag discusses "Ontological Possibility and the Nature of God . . . A Reply to Tillich."
- Main Currents in Modern Thought*, November. A. H. Maslow, "A Philosophy of Psychology."
- Nation*, Dec. 29. J. Bronowski, "Science and Human Values."
- New Republic*, Jan. 7. A discussion on the fashion of being a liberal if one teaches. The Jan. 14 issue has a symposium on the decade ahead.
- New Scholasticism*, Fall. R. P. Mohan, "The Philosophy of History."
- Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, July-December. Kathleen Kenyon, "Excavations at Jericho—1956."
- Pastoral Psychology*, November. S. Hiltner, "Freud, Psychoanalysis, and Religion."
- Personalist*, Autumn. R. T. Flewelling writes on the madness attendant on the Dead Sea Scroll discoveries.
- Reformed Journal*, November. L. Verduin continues on "Toward a Theistic Creationism."
- Review and Expositor*, January. An article on baptismal regeneration by J. W. Carpenter.
- Science*, Jan. 11. Vannevar Bush on the responsibilities of professional men to today's society.
- Scientific American*, December. H. H. Hyman and P. B. Sheatsley, "Attitudes Toward Desegregation."
- Scientific Monthly*, November. E. Gross, "Social Science Techniques: a Problem of Power and Responsibility." The January number has a series on the effects and uses of atomic radiation.
- Scottish Journal of Theology*, December. D. Cairns, "Thomas Chalmers' Astronomical Discourses: A Study in Natural Theology?" and K. E. Skydsgaard on the problem of tradition in theology today.
- Speculum*, January. G. Downey, "Education in the Christian Roman Empire: Christian and Pagan Theories under Constantine and His Successors."
- Teachers College Record*, January. R. F. Butts, "States' Rights and Education."
- Theological Studies*, December. F. J. McCool discusses the Synoptic source problem from a Jesuit point of view.
- Theology*, November. B. M. G. Reardon, "Demythologizing and Catholic Modernism."
- Theology Today*, October. A number of interesting articles on Karl Barth.
- Thomist*, October. J. V. Mullaney, "The Liberal Arts in the Aristotelian-Thomist Scheme of Knowledge."
- Victoria Institute*, May 28. D. J. Wiseman, "The Place and Progress of Biblical Archeology." On Dec. 10, J. N. D. Anderson discusses "Reflections on Law—Natural, Divine and Positive."